

Kid Lit - Summer 2022

for Aiden M.



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THE DAY WHEN THE GRASS WAS CUT.

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Among the Meadow People, by Clara Dillingham Pierson

There came a day when all the meadow people rushed back and forth, waving their feelers and talking hurriedly to each other. The fat old Cricket was nowhere to be seen. He said that one of his legs was lame and he thought it best to stay quietly in his hole. The young Crickets thought he was afraid. Perhaps he was, but he said that he was lame.



All the insects who had holes crawled into them carrying food. Everybody was anxious and fussy, and some people were even cross. It was all because the farmer and his men had come into the meadow to cut the grass. They began to work on the side nearest the road, but every step which the Horses took brought the mower nearer to the people who lived in the middle of the meadow or down toward the river.

"I have seen this done before," said the Garter Snake. "I got away from

the big mower, and hid in the grass by the trees, or by the stumps where the mower couldn't come. Then the men came and cut that grass with their scythes, and I had to wriggle away over the short, sharp grass-stubble to my hole. When they get near me this time, I shall go into my hole and stay there."



"They are not so bad after all," said the Tree Frog. "I like them better out-of-doors than I did in the house. They saw me out here once and didn't try to catch me."

A Meadow Mouse came hurrying along. "I must get home to my babies," she said. "They will be frightened if I am not there."

"Much good you can do when you are there!" growled a voice down under her feet. She was standing over the hole where the fat old Cricket was with his lame leg.

The mother Meadow Mouse looked rather angry for a minute, and then she answered: "I'm not so very large and strong, but I can squeak and let the Horses know where the nest is. Then they won't step on it. Last year I had ten or twelve babies there, and one of the men picked them up and looked at them and then put them back. I was so frightened that my fur stood on end and I shook like June grass in the wind."

"Humph! Too scared to run away," said the voice under her feet.

"Mothers don't run away and leave their children in danger," answered the Meadow Mouse. "I think it is a great deal braver to be brave when you are afraid than it is to be brave when you're not afraid." She whisked her long tail and scampered off through the grass. She did not go the nearest way to her nest because she thought the Garter Snake might be watching. She didn't wish him to know where she lived. She knew he was fond of young Mice, and didn't want him to come to see her babies

while she was away. She said he was not a good friend for young children.

"We don't mind it at all," said the Mosquitoes from the lower part of the meadow. "We are unusually hungry today anyway, and we shall enjoy having the men come."

"Nothing to make such a fuss over," said a Milkweed Butterfly. "Just crawl into your holes or fly away."

"Sometimes they step on the holes and close them," said an Ant. "What would you do if you were in a hole and it stopped being a hole and was just earth?"

"Crawl out, I suppose," answered the Milkweed Butterfly with a careless flutter.

"Yes," said the Ant, "but I don't see what there would be to crawl out through."

The Milkweed Butterfly was already gone. Butterflies never worry about anything very long, you know.

"Has anybody seen the Measuring Worm?" asked the Katydid. "Where is he?"

"Oh, I'm up a tree," answered a pleasant voice above their heads, "but I sha'n't be up a tree very long. I shall come down when the grass is cut."

"Oh, dear, dear, dear!" cried the Ants, hurrying around. "We can't think what we want to do. We don't know what we ought to do. We can't think and we don't know, and we don't think that we ought to!"

"Click!" said a Grasshopper, springing into the air. "We must hurry, hurry, hurry!" He jumped from a stalk of pepper-grass to a plantain. "We _must_ hurry," he said, and he jumped from the plantain back to the pepper-grass.

Up in the tree where the Measuring Worm was, some Katydids were sitting on a branch and singing shrilly: "Did you ever? Did you ever? Ever? Ever? Ever? Did you ever?" And this shows how much excited they were, for they usually sang only at night.

Then the mower came sweeping down the field, drawn by the Blind Horse

and the Dappled Gray, and guided by the farmer himself. The dust rose in clouds as they passed, the Grasshoppers gave mighty springs which took them out of the way, and all the singing and shrilling stopped until the mower had passed. The nodding grasses swayed and fell as the sharp knives slid over the ground. "We are going to be hay," they said, "and live in the big barn."

"Now we shall grow some more tender green blades," said the grass roots.

"Fine weather for haying," snorted the Dappled Gray. "We'll cut all the grass in this field before noon."

"Good feeling ground to walk on," said the Blind Horse, tossing his head until the harness jingled.

Then the Horses and the farmer and the mower passed far away, and the meadow people came together again.

"Well," said the Tree Frog. "That's over for a while."

The Ants and the Grasshoppers came back to their old places. "We did just the right thing," they cried joyfully. "We got out of the way."

The Measuring Worm and the Katydid came down from their tree as the Milkweed Butterfly fluttered past. "The men left the grass standing around the Meadow Mouse's nest," said the Milkweed Butterfly, "and the Cows up by the barn are telling how glad they will be to have the hay when the cold weather comes."

"Grass must grow and hay be cut," said the wise old Tree Frog, "and when the time comes we always know what to do. Puk-rup! Puk-r-r-rup!"

"I think," said the fat old Cricket, as he crawled out of his hole, "that my lame leg is well enough to use. There is nothing like rest for a lame leg."

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THE OLD HOUSE

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of
Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen

A very old house stood once in a street with several that were quite new and clean. The date of its erection had been carved on one of the beams, and surrounded by scrolls formed of tulips and hop-tendrils; by this date it could be seen that the old house was nearly three hundred years old. Verses too were written over the windows in old-fashioned letters, and grotesque faces, curiously carved, grinned at you from under the cornices. One story projected a long way over the other, and under the roof ran a leaden gutter, with a dragon's head at the end. The rain was intended to pour out at the dragon's mouth, but it ran out of his body instead, for there was a hole in the gutter. The other houses in the street were new and well built, with large window panes and smooth walls. Any one could see they had nothing to do with the old house. Perhaps they thought, "How long will that heap of rubbish remain here to be a disgrace to the whole street. The parapet projects so far forward that no one can see out of our windows what is going on in that direction. The stairs are as broad as the staircase of a castle, and as steep as if they led to a church-tower. The iron railing looks like the gate of a cemetery, and there are brass knobs upon it. It is really too ridiculous."

Opposite to the old house were more nice new houses, which had just the same opinion as their neighbors.

At the window of one of them sat a little boy with fresh rosy cheeks, and clear sparkling eyes, who was very fond of the old

house, in sunshine or in moonlight. He would sit and look at the wall from which the plaster had in some places fallen off, and fancy all sorts of scenes which had been in former times. How the street must have looked when the houses had all gable roofs, open staircases, and gutters with dragons at the spout. He could even see soldiers walking about with halberds. Certainly it was a very good house to look at for amusement.

An old man lived in it, who wore knee-breeches, a coat with large brass buttons, and a wig, which any one could see was a real wig. Every morning an old man came to clean the rooms, and to wait upon him, otherwise the old man in the knee-breeches would have been quite alone in the house. Sometimes he came to one of the windows and looked out; then the little boy nodded to him, and the old man nodded back again, till they became acquainted, and were friends, although they had never spoken to each other; but that was of no consequence.

The little boy one day heard his parents say, "The old man opposite is very well off, but is terribly lonely." The next Sunday morning the little boy wrapped something in a piece of paper and took it to the door of the old house, and said to the attendant who waited upon the old man, "Will you please give this from me to the gentleman who lives here; I have two tin soldiers, and this is one of them, and he shall have it, because I know he is terribly lonely."

And the old attendant nodded and looked very pleased, and then he carried the tin soldier into the house.

Afterwards he was sent over to ask the little boy if he would not like to pay a visit himself. His parents gave him permission, and so it was that he gained admission to the old house.

The brassy knobs on the railings shone more brightly than ever, as if they had been polished on account of his visit; and on the door were carved trumpeters standing in tulips, and it seemed as if they were blowing with all their might, their cheeks were so puffed out. "Tanta-ra-ra, the little boy is coming; Tanta-ra-ra, the little boy is coming."

Then the door opened. All round the hall hung old portraits of knights in armor, and ladies in silk gowns; and the armor rattled, and the silk dresses rustled. Then came a staircase which went up a long way, and then came down a little way and led to a balcony, which was

in a very ruinous state. There were large holes and long cracks, out of which grew grass and leaves, indeed the whole balcony, the courtyard, and the walls were so overgrown with green that they looked like a garden. In the balcony stood flower-pots, on which were heads having asses' ears, but the flowers in them grew just as they pleased. In one pot pinks were growing all over the sides, at least the green leaves were shooting forth stalk and stem, and saying as plainly as they could speak, "The air has fanned me, the sun has kissed me, and I am promised a little flower for next Sunday--really for next Sunday."

Then they entered a room in which the walls were covered with leather, and the leather had golden flowers stamped upon it.

"Gilding will fade in damp weather,
To endure, there is nothing like leather,"

said the walls. Chairs handsomely carved, with elbows on each side, and with very high backs, stood in the room, and as they creaked they seemed to say, "Sit down. Oh dear, how I am creaking. I shall certainly have the gout like the old cupboard. Gout in my back, ugh."

And then the little boy entered the room where the old man sat.

"Thank you for the tin soldier my little friend," said the old man, "and thank you also for coming to see me."

"Thanks, thanks," or "Creak, creak," said all the furniture.

There was so much that the pieces of furniture stood in each other's way to get a sight of the little boy.

On the wall near the centre of the room hung the picture of a beautiful lady, young and gay, dressed in the fashion of the olden times, with powdered hair, and a full, stiff skirt. She said neither "thanks" nor "creak," but she looked down upon the little boy with her mild eyes; and then he said to the old man,

"Where did you get that picture?"

"From the shop opposite," he replied. "Many portraits hang there that none seem to trouble themselves about. The persons they represent have been dead and buried long since. But I knew this lady many years ago, and she has been dead nearly half a century."

Under a glass beneath the picture hung a nosegay of withered flowers, which were no doubt half a century old too, at least they appeared so.

And the pendulum of the old clock went to and fro, and the hands turned round; and as time passed on, everything in the room grew older, but no one seemed to notice it.

"They say at home," said the little boy, "that you are very lonely."

"Oh," replied the old man, "I have pleasant thoughts of all that has passed, recalled by memory; and now you are come to visit me, and that is very pleasant."

Then he took from the book-case, a book full of pictures representing long processions of wonderful coaches, such as are never seen at the present time. Soldiers like the knave of clubs, and citizens with waving banners. The tailors had a flag with a pair of scissors supported by two lions, and on the shoemakers' flag there were not boots, but an eagle with two heads, for the shoemakers must have everything arranged so that they can say, "This is a pair." What a picture-book it was; and then the old man went into another room to fetch apples and nuts. It was very pleasant, certainly, to be in that old house.

"I cannot endure it," said the tin soldier, who stood on a shelf, "it is so lonely and dull here. I have been accustomed to live in a family, and I cannot get used to this life. I cannot bear it. The whole day is long enough, but the evening is longer. It is not here like it was in your house opposite, when your father and mother talked so cheerfully together, while you and all the dear children made such a delightful noise. No, it is all lonely in the old man's house. Do you think he gets any kisses? Do you think he ever has friendly looks, or a Christmas tree? He will have nothing now but the grave. Oh, I cannot bear it."

"You must not look only on the sorrowful side," said the little boy; "I think everything in this house is beautiful, and all the old pleasant thoughts come back here to pay visits."

"Ah, but I never see any, and I don't know them," said the tin soldier, "and I cannot bear it."

"You must bear it," said the little boy. Then the old man came back with a pleasant face; and brought with him beautiful preserved fruits, as well as apples and nuts; and the little boy thought no more of the tin soldier. How happy and delighted the little boy was; and after he returned home, and while days and weeks passed, a great deal of nodding took place from one house to the other, and then the little boy went to pay another visit. The carved trumpeters blew "Tanta-ra-ra. There is the little boy. Tanta-ra-ra." The swords and armor on the old knight's pictures rattled. The silk dresses rustled, the leather repeated its rhyme, and the old chairs had the gout in their backs, and cried, "Creak;" it was all exactly like the first time; for in that house, one day and one hour were just like another. "I cannot bear it any longer," said the tin soldier; "I have wept tears of tin, it is so melancholy here. Let me go to the wars, and lose an arm or a leg, that would be some change; I cannot bear it. Now I know what it is to have visits from one's old recollections, and all they bring with them. I have had visits from mine, and you may believe me it is not altogether pleasant. I was very nearly jumping from the shelf. I saw you all in your house opposite, as if you were really present. It was Sunday morning, and you children stood round the table, singing the hymn that you sing every morning. You were standing quietly, with your hands folded, and your father and mother. You were standing quietly, with your hands folded, and your father and mother were looking just as serious, when the door opened, and your little sister Maria, who is not two years old, was brought into the room. You know she always dances when she hears music and singing of any sort; so she began to dance immediately, although she ought not to have done so, but she could not get into the right time because the tune was so slow; so she stood first on one leg and then on the other, and bent her head very low, but it would not suit the music. You all stood looking very grave, although it was very difficult to do so, but I laughed so to myself that I fell down from the table, and got a bruise, which is there still; I know it was not right to laugh. So all this, and everything else that I have seen, keeps running in my head, and these must be the old recollections that bring so many thoughts with them. Tell me whether you still sing on Sundays, and tell me about your little sister Maria, and how my old comrade is, the other tin soldier. Ah, really he must be very happy; I cannot endure this life."

"You are given away," said the little boy; "you must stay. Don't you see that?" Then the old man came in, with a box containing many curious things to show him. Rouge-pots, scent-boxes, and old cards, so large and so richly gilded, that none are ever seen like them in these

days. And there were smaller boxes to look at, and the piano was opened, and inside the lid were painted landscapes. But when the old man played, the piano sounded quite out of tune. Then he looked at the picture he had bought at the broker's, and his eyes sparkled brightly as he nodded at it, and said, "Ah, she could sing that tune."

"I will go to the wars! I will go to the wars!" cried the tin soldier as loud as he could, and threw himself down on the floor. Where could he have fallen? The old man searched, and the little boy searched, but he was gone, and could not be found. "I shall find him again," said the old man, but he did not find him. The boards of the floor were open and full of holes. The tin soldier had fallen through a crack between the boards, and lay there now in an open grave. The day went by, and the little boy returned home; the week passed, and many more weeks. It was winter, and the windows were quite frozen, so the little boy was obliged to breathe on the panes, and rub a hole to peep through at the old house. Snow drifts were lying in all the scrolls and on the inscriptions, and the steps were covered with snow as if no one were at home. And indeed nobody was home, for the old man was dead. In the evening, a hearse stopped at the door, and the old man in his coffin was placed in it. He was to be taken to the country to be buried there in his own grave; so they carried him away; no one followed him, for all his friends were dead; and the little boy kissed his hand to the coffin as the hearse moved away with it. A few days after, there was an auction at the old house, and from his window the little boy saw the people carrying away the pictures of old knights and ladies, the flower-pots with the long ears, the old chairs, and the cup-boards. Some were taken one way, some another. Her portrait, which had been bought at the picture dealer's, went back again to his shop, and there it remained, for no one seemed to know her, or to care for the old picture. In the spring; they began to pull the house itself down; people called it complete rubbish. From the street could be seen the room in which the walls were covered with leather, ragged and torn, and the green in the balcony hung straggling over the beams; they pulled it down quickly, for it looked ready to fall, and at last it was cleared away altogether. "What a good riddance," said the neighbors' houses. Very shortly, a fine new house was built farther back from the road; it had lofty windows and smooth walls, but in front, on the spot where the old house really stood, a little garden was planted, and wild vines grew up over the neighboring walls; in front of the garden were large iron railings and a great gate, which looked very stately. People used to stop and peep through the railings. The sparrows assembled in dozens upon the wild vines, and chattered all together as

loud as they could, but not about the old house; none of them could remember it, for many years had passed by, so many indeed, that the little boy was now a man, and a really good man too, and his parents were very proud of him. He was just married, and had come, with his young wife, to reside in the new house with the garden in front of it, and now he stood there by her side while she planted a field flower that she thought very pretty. She was planting it herself with her little hands, and pressing down the earth with her fingers. "Oh dear, what was that?" she exclaimed, as something pricked her. Out of the soft earth something was sticking up. It was--only think!--it was really the tin soldier, the very same which had been lost up in the old man's room, and had been hidden among old wood and rubbish for a long time, till it sunk into the earth, where it must have been for many years. And the young wife wiped the soldier, first with a green leaf, and then with her fine pocket-handkerchief, that smelt of such beautiful perfume. And the tin soldier felt as if he was recovering from a fainting fit. "Let me see him," said the young man, and then he smiled and shook his head, and said, "It can scarcely be the same, but it reminds me of something that happened to one of my tin soldiers when I was a little boy." And then he told his wife about the old house and the old man, and of the tin soldier which he had sent across, because he thought the old man was lonely; and he related the story so clearly that tears came into the eyes of the young wife for the old house and the old man. "It is very likely that this is really the same soldier," said she, "and I will take care of him, and always remember what you have told me; but some day you must show me the old man's grave."

"I don't know where it is," he replied; "no one knows. All his friends are dead; no one took care of him, and I was only a little boy."

"Oh, how dreadfully lonely he must have been," said she.

"Yes, terribly lonely," cried the tin soldier; "still it is delightful not to be forgotten."

"Delightful indeed," cried a voice quite near to them; no one but the tin soldier saw that it came from a rag of the leather which hung in tatters; it had lost all its gilding, and looked like wet earth, but it had an opinion, and it spoke it thus:--

"Gilding will fade in damp weather,
To endure, there is nothing like leather."

But the tin soldier did not believe any such thing.

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THE CLOUD

by Robert Reineck

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of
The Turquoise Story Book, by Various

One hot summer morning a little cloud rose out of the sea, and floated playfully across the blue sky. The dreary brown earth, parched with a long drouth, lay far below. The little cloud looked down and saw the poor people toiling away with heavy hearts, while she, carefree and happy, floated along on the fresh morning breeze.

She said to herself, "Oh, how much I wish I could help the poor people down there. If I could but lighten their work, or refresh them with food and drink!"

As the day passed and the cloud grew larger, the wish to help the suffering people filled her heart.

On earth it grew hotter and hotter, and the people were fainting with heat, but they could not stop their work, for they were very poor. Sometimes they looked pleadingly up into the sky. It seemed as if they were saying to the cloud: "Oh, if you could but help us!"

"I will help you! I will, indeed!" said the cloud, and she began immediately to sink softly toward the earth.

As she floated down she suddenly remembered something which she had heard when she was a tiny child, rocked in the lap of Mother Ocean.

Someone had told her that clouds die if they float too near the earth.

For a moment she wavered in her thought and drifted to and fro. But at last she stood still and spoke bravely and cheerfully, "Men of the earth, I will help you, come what may."

Suddenly she grew large, and strong and powerful. Never before had she dreamed herself capable of such strength. Like an angel of blessing she stood above the earth, lifted her head, and spread her wings far over the broad fields.

So great and mighty she appeared that men and beasts marvelled at the sight; the trees, grass, and flowers bowed their heads before her, but in their hearts they knew she would help them.

"Yes, I will help you," cried the cloud once more. "Take me to yourselves! I die for you!"

A mighty purpose filled the cloud's heart, and a holy light shone from her face. She sank nearer to the earth. The next moment a blessed shower of rain refreshed the hills and valleys.

The rain was the cloud's deed; the rain was the cloud's death; but through her death she was glorified.

After the shower was over, a lovely rainbow, made of the purest rays of heavenly light, arched across the sky. It was the last greeting of a love so great that it could serve.

Soon the rainbow, too, disappeared, but the memory of the blessing which the shower had brought to the earth was kept in the hearts of men for many years to come.

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NA-HA THE FIGHTER

from The Project Gutenberg eBook of
Tales from Silver Lands, by Charles J. Finger

IN the Far South near Cape Horn there is a place of many islands, and it is a corner of the world where winds are piercing cold and great black clouds scurry across a lead-gray sky. From snowclad mountains slide rivers of ice from which break off mighty pieces to fall into the sea with thunder-sounds. It is a land wrinkled into narrow valleys that are always gloomy and cold and wet. Cold, ice cold, is the gray-green sea, and the wild cries of a million sea birds fill the air. Sometimes great albatrosses sweep up the channels between the high, jagged mountains or drop low to sail over penguin-crowded rocks, and sometimes the mountain echoes are deep-toned with the booming of walrus and the barking of seals. But people are few. There are Indians there, poor gentle folk who fish in the sea and who know nothing but a life of cold, and they paddle or sit crouching in their canoes, taking no heed of the biting wind and the snow that falls on their naked bodies.

Travelling in that part of the world, I came upon a boy who had been left, somehow, on an island not much larger than a good-sized playground. He must have been there alone for some months, for he had lived on mussels and shell-fish, and the empty shells formed a good-sized heap about his sleeping place. Though I questioned him closely later, when we came to know one another, I could never learn how he got there. He was, I suppose, about ten years old, and certainly bright and intelligent. As for his memory it was quite remarkable, and he picked up words and the names of things very rapidly. Altogether, he

stayed with me for three months, and I was often astonished at the aptness with which he did some things, as, for instance, the making of an arrow-head from a piece of broken bottle. But other things he seemed quite unable to do. A knot in a rope puzzled him sorely and for a long time a belt-buckle was a deep mystery to him.

One day I found that he was trying to tell me a story about a seal, for we had seen several that morning. For awhile I paid no attention, being occupied at something or other that required care, but soon it dawned on me that he was very earnest and that the tale was a long one. Fearing that I had missed much by my preoccupation and carelessness, I made him tell it to me a second and a third and a fourth time, and presently made shift to piece things together, and so get a fair notion of his story.

I have called the tale by the name of the hero and have set it down in my own words and as I understood it. Were I to write it in his words it would go something like this:

“Many day, a far day, under-water man walk water. Eat man my father’s father; men cry much hard.” There would have to be indicated, too, much gesticulation and arm waving by way of illustration and emphasis. . . . So here is the tale.

* * * * *

Long years ago, the people of that land were sadly at the mercy of the wild, hairy folk who lived under the sea. To be sure, there were long periods when they were left in peace to do their fishing, though from their canoes they could look down into the waters and see the under-sea people walking on the sands at the bottom, very shadowy and vague, though, in the greenish light. Still, it was clear enough, for those who watched, to see their hair-covered bodies, their long and serpent-like arms and their noseless faces.

But again, there were times when the under-sea men marched in great numbers out of the water and caught the land men, dragging them down to their deaths. In such numbers they came that there was no resisting them. Nor was there escape, for the under-sea people could walk on the water, going faster than the wind itself. With ear-splitting booming they would form themselves into a wide circle about the canoes, then draw nearer in wild rushes or strange slidings and drag the frightened men into the green-gray water. Sometimes a few only were taken and those that were left, looking down, might see the under-sea folk dragging their fellows to great rocks to which they bound them with ropes of

leathery kelp.

One day the under-sea people caught Na-Ha, a youth strong as a wild wind, whose muscles were knotted like oak branches, one who smiled when danger came. Five of the noseless people attacked him and of the five, Na-Ha sent three to the bottom of the sea with broken necks, for though he smote them with his clenched fist alone, they staggered back and swiftly sank, and the blood that gushed from their mouths made a spreading pink cloud in the water. But soon the sea was alive with wild, raging faces and the roaring of them was like the southeast wind in the forest trees, yet Na-Ha stood in his little canoe, cold and calm, and the smile did not leave his lips. Stealthily they crept toward him, none at first daring to attack, until with a fierce noise and clamour all rushed together, leaping upon him in his canoe and bearing it down by sheer press and weight, Na-Ha in the midst of the tangled mass of hair-covered creatures. Some who saw that fight said that the sudden silence when the waters closed over them hurt the ears like a thunder clap, but the true hearted Na-Ha was the last to disappear, and while he smote the black-haired ones furiously, the smile of scorn was still on his face.

Like a picture in a dream some saw the fight among the rocks at the bottom of the sea, saw the noseless ones crowding about the lad, saw others leaping over the heads of those who did not dare to near him, saw others again creeping in the sea sand, trailing kelp ropes to bind him. Many fell in that battle under the sea and the low waves that lapped the shore were red with blood that day. How it ended none knew, for with the dying light and the sand clouds that hung in the water all became gray at last and then swiftly faded.

That night the land people wept for Na-Ha the untamed, Na-Ha whose spear was like lightning, Na-Ha whose canoe rode the waves like the brown storm-birds. Tales were whispered of how he never bent beneath a load, of how in the blackest night he drove his boat before the storm, of how once he swept out to sea after a great whale and slew it, so that his people were saved from the hunger-death.

But with the screaming of the morning sea-gulls Na-Ha came to them again, walking up out of the sea, and his face was set and stern. Nor did he say a word until he had eaten and thought awhile.

The tale he told was of the under-seas and of his wandering after the battle in which he left so many dead in bloody sand. He had been sore-pressed, he said, but had broken away and come to a door in a cave,

which he entered. It was a vast cavern in which he found himself, so vast that he could not at first see the end, and the roof of it he never saw, it being lost in a strange, cool-green light. The floor of the place was of gold dust and silver sand, and out of it grew networks of white rocks about which swam fish of many gay colours, while everywhere seaweeds swayed in gently moving water.

Soon he came to a place where, on a seat of white, sat a woman with bent head, and she was fair of skin and her golden hair floated in the water like a cloud. Being bidden, Na-Ha told her the tale of the fight and how the earth people were woe-ridden because of the evil work of the under-sea folk.

Patiently she listened, her cheek on her hand and her eyes large with grief, and when Na-Ha had done she told him that there was but one way to free his people and that was the way of the white death. Much more she told him and then gave him a great sea-shell and made him know that when he blew it the great cold that lies under the seven stars would be freed and the under-sea people driven for all time to their own place. Then she stepped from her seat, and taking Na-Ha by the hand gazed at him long.

"Many there are, Na-Ha, who live not to know of the good that they do. He who looses the white death must himself be stilled. This I tell you, Na-Ha, lest your heart fail you," she said.

That was all, for he did not tell the tale of how he came again to the land, but he showed them the great shell and said that his mind was made up to free his own people, though he himself slept the sleep. At that the people set up a great shout and there were not wanting those who offered to sound the blast, saying that it were better for Na-Ha to lead the people. But that Na-Ha refused, and added that the under-sea woman had told him that before the blast was blown all the land people should take themselves and their belongings to a far land under the sun, for staying where they were, it would do but small good to drive the under-sea people to their own place for ever, seeing that they themselves must also be ice-stiffened.

Then arose a confusion of talk, many being unwilling to leave the land where their fathers and the fathers of their fathers had lived, but Na-Ha prevailed and overruled them, and soon the day came when there was a great movement and canoes were loaded and the land people set off for the country under the sun. So Na-Ha was left alone.

Over the length and the breadth of the land Na-Ha walked, to see if by mischance some had been left, but there were none. And when the sea-hen and the albatross and the gull and the brown storm-birds saw the hair-covered, noseless people come out of the sea, when with the black loneliness of night the snow came and the land waters were prisoned under glassy ice, when the morning sun looked on a world of rime and crystal frost, then Na-Ha put the great shell to his lips and blew a blast that woke the echoes.

So the world soon grew faint and sleepy and all living creatures except the noseless ones fled or flew after the land people, and there was strange stillness everywhere. Trees that had been green grew horned and black and then ghost-white. And the black wind came raging and furious, and grinding, groaning ice-mountains swam in the sea and locked the land, and hills were cased in beryl walls.

Seeing all that, for a time the under-sea folk were full of delight, believing themselves to be masters of the land, but soon they feared the glistening white of the world, the black scurrying clouds, and the fast-thickening ice. So they sought the sea, but no sea was there, only thick-ribbed ice across which swept snow-laden, stinging winds, and instead of the quiet of the under-water there was the calm of the white death. Under the eaves of the rocks they crouched, but it was small help, for with the biting cold they shrivelled and shrank. Close they hugged themselves, their elbows thrust into their hairy sides, their legs bent, making themselves small. And thus they stayed, nevermore to be as they were. For in that great cold the under-water people became seals, and seals they remained.

Well and bravely stood Na-Ha while all this came to pass, scornful of the death that clawed at him. Nor did he lay down to die until the great cold had passed away and his people returned to find the under-water folk forevermore bound to their own place, powerless to harm, looking always with wide, wondering eyes, lest the mighty Na-Ha again steal upon them and bring the great white death.

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LITTLE ONE-EYE, LITTLE TWO-EYES, AND LITTLE THREE-EYES

by Brothers Grimm.

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of

The Green Fairy Book, by Various

There was once a woman who had three daughters, of whom the eldest was called Little One-eye, because she had only one eye in the middle of her forehead; and the second, Little Two-eyes, because she had two eyes like other people; and the youngest, Little Three-eyes, because she had three eyes, and _her_ third eye was also in the middle of her forehead. But because Little Two-eyes did not look any different from other children, her sisters and mother could not bear her. They would say to her, 'You with your two eyes are no better than common folk; you don't belong to us.' They pushed her here, and threw her wretched clothes there, and gave her to eat only what they left, and they were as unkind to her as ever they could be.

It happened one day that Little Two-eyes had to go out into the fields to take care of the goat, but she was still quite hungry because her sisters had given her so little to eat. So she sat down in the meadow and began to cry, and she cried so much that two little brooks ran out of her eyes. But when she looked up once in her grief there stood a woman beside her who asked, 'Little Two-eyes, what are you crying for?' Little Two-eyes answered, 'Have I not reason to cry? Because I have two eyes like other people, my sisters and my mother cannot bear me; they push me out of one corner into another, and give me nothing to eat except what they leave. To-day they have given me so little that I am still quite hungry.' Then the wise woman said, 'Little Two-eyes, dry your eyes, and I will tell you something so that you need never be hungry again. Only say to your goat,

"Little goat, bleat, Little table, appear,"

and a beautifully spread table will stand before you, with the most delicious food on it, so that you can eat as much as you want. And when you have had enough and don't want the little table any more, you have only to say,

"Little goat, bleat, Little table, away,"

and then it will vanish.' Then the wise woman went away.

But Little Two-eyes thought, 'I must try at once if what she has told me

is true, for I am more hungry than ever'; and she said,

'Little goat, bleat, Little table appear,'

and scarcely had she uttered the words, when there stood a little table before her covered with a white cloth, on which were arranged a plate, with a knife and fork and a silver spoon, and the most beautiful dishes, which were smoking hot, as if they had just come out of the kitchen. Then Little Two-eyes said the shortest grace she knew, and set to work and made a good dinner. And when she had had enough, she said, as the wise woman had told her,

'Little goat, bleat, Little table, away,'

and immediately the table and all that was on it disappeared again. 'That is a splendid way of housekeeping,' thought Little Two-eyes, and she was quite happy and contented.

In the evening, when she went home with her goat, she found a little earthenware dish with the food that her sisters had thrown to her, but she did not touch it. The next day she went out again with her goat, and left the few scraps which were given her. The first and second times her sisters did not notice this, but when it happened continually, they remarked it and said, 'Something is the matter with Little Two-eyes, for she always leaves her food now, and she used to gobble up all that was given her. She must have found other means of getting food.' So in order to get at the truth, Little One-eye was told to go out with Little Two-eyes when she drove the goat to pasture, and to notice particularly what she got there, and whether anyone brought her food and drink.

Now when Little Two-eyes was setting out, Little One-eye came up to her and said, 'I will go into the field with you and see if you take good care of the goat, and if you drive him properly to get grass.' But Little Two-eyes saw what Little One-eye had in her mind, and she drove the goat into the long grass and said, 'Come, Little One-eye, we will sit down here, and I will sing you something.'

Little One-eye sat down, and as she was very much tired by the long walk to which she was not used, and by the hot day, and as Little Two-eyes went on singing.

'Little One-eye, are you awake? Little One-eye, are you asleep?'

she shut her one eye and fell asleep. When Little Two-eyes saw that

Little One-eye was asleep and could find out nothing, she said,

'Little goat, bleat, Little table, appear,'

and sat down at her table and ate and drank as much as she wanted. Then she said again,

'Little goat, bleat, Little table, away.'

and in the twinkling of an eye all had vanished.

Little Two-eyes then woke Little One-eye and said, 'Little One-eye, you meant to watch, and, instead, you went to sleep; in the meantime the goat might have run far and wide. Come, we will go home.' So they went home, and Little Two-eyes again left her little dish untouched, and Little One-eye could not tell her mother why she would not eat, and said as an excuse, 'I was so sleepy out-of-doors.'

The next day the mother said to Little Three-eyes, 'This time you shall go with Little Two-eyes and watch whether she eats anything out in the fields, and whether anyone brings her food and drink, for eat and drink she must secretly.' So Little Three-eyes went to Little Two-eyes and said, 'I will go with you and see if you take good care of the goat, and if you drive him properly to get grass.' But little Two-eyes knew what Little Three-eyes had in her mind, and she drove the goat out into the tall grass and said, 'We will sit down here, Little Three-eyes, and I will sing you something.' Little Three-eyes sat down; she was tired by the walk and the hot day, and Little Two-eyes sang the same little song again:

'Little Three eyes, are you awake?'

but instead of singing as she ought to have done,

'Little Three-eyes, are you asleep?'

she sang, without thinking,

'Little _Two-eyes_, are you asleep?'

She went on singing,

'Little Three-eyes, are you awake? Little _Two-eyes_, are you asleep?'

so that the two eyes of Little Three-eyes fell asleep, but the third, which was not spoken to in the little rhyme, did not fall asleep. Of course Little Three-eyes shut that eye also out of cunning, to look as if she were asleep, but it was blinking and could see everything quite well.

And when Little Two-eyes thought that Little Three-eyes was sound asleep, she said her rhyme,

‘Little goat, bleat, Little table, appear,’

and ate and drank to her heart’s content, and then made the table go away again, by saying,

‘Little goat, bleat, Little table, away.’

But Little Three-eyes had seen everything. Then Little Two-eyes came to her, and woke her and said, ‘Well, Little Three-eyes, have you been asleep? You watch well! Come, we will go home.’ When they reached home, Little Two-eyes did not eat again, and Little Three-eyes said to the mother, ‘I know now why that proud thing eats nothing. When she says to the goat in the field,

“Little goat, bleat, Little table, appear,”

a table stands before her, spread with the best food, much better than we have; and when she has had enough, she says,

“Little goat, bleat, Little table, away,”

and everything disappears again. I saw it all exactly. She made two of my eyes go to sleep with a little rhyme, but the one in my forehead remained awake, luckily!’

Then the envious mother cried out, ‘Will you fare better than we do? you shall not have the chance to do so again!’ and she fetched a knife, and killed the goat.

When Little Two-eyes saw this, she went out full of grief, and sat down in the meadow and wept bitter tears. Then again the wise woman stood before her, and said, ‘Little Two-eyes, what are you crying for?’ ‘Have I not reason to cry?’ she answered, ‘the goat, which when I said the little rhyme, spread the table so beautifully, my mother has killed, and now I must suffer hunger and want again.’ The wise woman said, ‘Little

Two-eyes, I will give you a good piece of advice. Ask your sisters to give you the heart of the dead goat, and bury it in the earth before the house-door; that will bring you good luck.' Then she disappeared, and Little Two-eyes went home, and said to her sisters, 'Dear sisters, do give me something of my goat; I ask nothing better than its heart.' Then they laughed and said, 'You can have that if you want nothing more.' And Little Two-eyes took the heart and buried it in the evening when all was quiet, as the wise woman had told her, before the house-door. The next morning when they all awoke and came to the house-door, there stood a most wonderful tree, which had leaves of silver and fruit of gold growing on it--you never saw anything more lovely and gorgeous in your life! But they did not know how the tree had grown up in the night; only Little Two-eyes knew that it had sprung from the heart of the goat, for it was standing just where she had buried it in the ground. Then the mother said to Little One-eye, 'Climb up, my child, and break us off the fruit from the tree.' Little One-eye climbed up, but just when she was going to take hold of one of the golden apples the bough sprang out of her hands; and this happened every time, so that she could not break off a single apple, however hard she tried. Then the mother said, 'Little Three-eyes, do you climb up; you with your three eyes can see round better than Little One-eye.' So Little One-eye slid down, and Little Three-eyes climbed up; but she was not any more successful; look round as she might, the golden apples bent themselves back. At last the mother got impatient and climbed up herself, but she was even less successful than Little One-eye and Little Three-eyes in catching hold of the fruit, and only grasped at the empty air. Then Little Two-eyes said, 'I will just try once, perhaps I shall succeed better.' The sisters called out, 'You with your two eyes will no doubt succeed!' But Little Two-eyes climbed up, and the golden apples did not jump away from her, but behaved quite properly, so that she could pluck them off, one after the other, and brought a whole apron-full down with her. The mother took them from her, and, instead of behaving better to poor Little Two-eyes, as they ought to have done, they were jealous that she only could reach the fruit and behaved still more unkindly to her.

It happened one day that when they were all standing together by the tree that a young knight came riding along. 'Be quick, Little Two-eyes,' cried the two sisters, 'creep under this, so that you shall not disgrace us,' and they put over poor Little Two-eyes as quickly as possible an empty cask, which was standing close to the tree, and they pushed the golden apples which she had broken off under with her. When the knight, who was a very handsome young man, rode up, he wondered to see the marvellous tree of gold and silver, and said to the two sisters, 'Whose is this beautiful tree? Whoever will give me a twig of it shall have

whatever she wants.' Then Little One-eye and Little Three-eyes answered that the tree belonged to them, and that they would certainly break him off a twig. They gave themselves a great deal of trouble, but in vain; the twigs and fruit bent back every time from their hands. Then the knight said, 'It is very strange that the tree should belong to you, and yet that you have not the power to break anything from it!' But they would have that the tree was theirs; and while they were saying this, Little Two-eyes rolled a couple of golden apples from under the cask, so that they lay at the knight's feet, for she was angry with Little One-eye and Little Three-eyes for not speaking the truth. When the knight saw the apples he was astonished, and asked where they came from. Little One-eye and Little Three-eyes answered that they had another sister, but she could not be seen because she had only two eyes, like ordinary people. But the knight demanded to see her, and called out, 'Little Two-eyes, come forth.' Then Little Two-eyes came out from under the cask quite happily, and the knight was astonished at her great beauty, and said, 'Little Two-eyes, I am sure you can break me off a twig from the tree.' 'Yes,' answered Little Two-eyes, 'I can, for the tree is mine.' So she climbed up and broke off a small branch with its silver leaves and golden fruit without any trouble, and gave it to the knight. Then he said, 'Little Two-eyes, what shall I give you for this?' 'Ah,' answered Little Two-eyes, 'I suffer hunger and thirst, want and sorrow, from early morning till late in the evening; if you would take me with you, and free me from this, I should be happy!' Then the knight lifted Little Two-eyes on his horse, and took her home to his father's castle. There he gave her beautiful clothes, and food and drink, and because he loved her so much he married her, and the wedding was celebrated with great joy.

When the handsome knight carried Little Two-eyes away with him, the two sisters envied her good luck at first. 'But the wonderful tree is still with us, after all,' they thought, 'and although we cannot break any fruit from it, everyone will stop and look at it, and will come to us and praise it; who knows whether we may not reap a harvest from it?' But the next morning the tree had flown, and their hopes with it; and when Little Two-eyes looked out of her window there it stood underneath, to her great delight. Little Two-eyes lived happily for a long time. Once two poor women came to the castle to beg alms. Then Little Two-eyes looked at them and recognised both her sisters, Little One-eye and Little Three-eyes, who had become so poor that they came to beg bread at her door. But Little Two-eyes bade them welcome, and was so good to them that they both repented from their hearts of having been so unkind to their sister.



THE TOM-BOY, by Fanny Fern
1856

“For shame, Maria!”

I turned my head. A little girl was just clambering down from a pile of boards in a vacant lot near the house. It was Saturday afternoon; and all the long week “Maria” had been shut up in a school, from nine o’clock till two, although she was only seven years old; and every afternoon, when she should have been playing, she was trying to cram her poor bewildered head with great long lessons, which some stupid person had made for little children, full of great big words, which it was impossible for her to understand, even if she could manage to commit them to memory. No wonder Maria was glad when Saturday afternoon came and lessons and school were over for one week at least; no wonder she skipped off into “the vacant lot,” and climbed up and down the pile of boards, to stretch her poor little cramped limbs, and to see if there was really any life left in them; and a very good time she had been having of it, too; jumping off of one end of the pile down on the soft grass, then making a “teeter,” by pulling out one of the boards and balancing it on the others; she on one end, now sailing up so high! and Sarah Jane Clarke on the other, going down so low! and now and then both would roll off into the grass and laugh so merrily; then they would pelt

each other with handfuls of grass, and chase each other round the pile of boards, till their pale cheeks were as red as fresh-blown roses; to be sure Maria had torn a hole in a shilling calico apron; but that is easily repaired, much more easily than a crooked spine, much more easily than a diseased brain; but I suppose Mrs. Mott did not think of this when she frowned on her little daughter, and said, "For shame, Maria, what a tom-boy." She never had heard, as I have, a poor worn-out little girl, tossing from side to side in her bed, at night, repeating parts of her grammar and geography _in her sleep_, and dreaming that she was being punished for not getting them more perfectly. She never stood over a little girl who was dying—dying because her little brain had been worked at school harder than her little feeble growing body could bear. Ah, if she had, she would have been so glad to have seen the rose bloom on the pale cheeks of her little daughter, that Saturday afternoon, that she would never have minded the torn apron, or made the child ashamed of what was really proper and good for her to do; what it would have been well for Maria had she done every afternoon of her life.

"Tom-boy?" no, a girl is not a tom-boy for playing "teeter" and climbing boards; no more than her brother is a girl, because he sometimes sits on a chair. I say romp; I say shout; I say fly kites; play ball; drive hoop; climb sheds and fences, tear your aprons (mind you learn to mend them yourself), soil your hands and faces, tangle your hair, do any thing that's innocent, but _don't_ grow up with crooked backs, flat chests, sallow faces, dull eyes and diseased brains; _your_ mother, and yours, and yours, I hope, think as I do about these things. Ask them.

Maria's mother did not think so. So she went on frowning at her little daughter, every time she saw her using her limbs, and reproved her as severely for tearing her apron as she would had she told a lie, and perhaps more so. So Maria studied and grew crooked, grew crooked and studied until she was sixteen years old; then her mother sent her to Professor Cram-all's school "_to be finished_." This gentleman used to give his young ladies longer and harder lessons than their brothers had in college, and was very proud of his scholars and his school. So Maria used to sit up every night till eleven and twelve o'clock, getting her lessons, beside being in school from nine in the morning till three; and Maria's mother thought it was a grand school, and Professor Cram-all, the very king of teachers. Well, Maria staid there two years, and "_got finished_" and when she came from there, she went straight to a "water-cure establishment" (your mother will tell you what that is), and there she is now, trying to get her poor crooked back straightened. Poor sick girl, what good does all her Greek and Latin do her now? Ah! had her mother only let her play as well as study, study less and play more,

until her limbs grew stronger. I know she thinks so now, when she drives out to the water-cure establishment, to see her dying daughter. And yet her mother _meant_ to do right—when she was young, she never was taught at all, and so she grew up very ignorant; this often made her ashamed when she was a lady, and so she determined that her daughter, Maria, should know every thing; and in her hurry to do this she forgot her poor little childish body altogether. So I say, again, to all of you, don't mind being called “a tom-boy”—run, jump, shout, fly kites, climb boards, tangle your hair, soil your hands and tear your aprons, and Nature will reward you with strong straight backs, full chests, bright eyes, rosy cheeks, and a long life.

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THE WONDERFUL TUNE
from The Project Gutenberg eBook of
The Starlight Wonder Book, by Henry Beston

Once upon a time, a young minstrel wandered over hill, over dale, through the world, earning his bread as he strayed by piping on a penny-pipe to all who cared for a tune. Young was he and little of stature, his eyes and his hair were brown, and in bright blue was he clad.

Now it came to pass that, as he wandered through the world, the little minstrel said to himself one morn, “If some tunes make people merry, and others make them sad, whilst still others make them dance, why should there not be a tune so wondrously pleasant and gay that all who chance to hear it must remain joyous of heart, and can never be sad or bad or unhappy again? Down the roads of the world I shall seek the wonderful tune.”

And, with this new thought in his mind, the little minstrel continued on his way through the world, bidding good-morrow to all, questioning all. And some there were who thought him mad and were scarcely civil;

others pushed him aside as a jesting vagabond; and there were even those who would have cast him into prison as a disturber of the public mind and a wandering rogue. But there were others, too, and these were the brave and the merciful and the kind and the merry, who speeded him on his way and wished him luck in his quest.

The summer ripened and came to an end; the crackled leaves tumbled and fled before a howling wind; snow covered the lonely fields; and still the little minstrel roamed the world, seeking the wonderful tune.

Now it fortuneed that, as the little minstrel turned his steps to the west, he arrived in the city of a king whose court musician was said to know all the tunes in the world. Travel-worn, brown of face, and humbly clad as he was, the youth made his way through the palace and, cap in hand, knocked gently at the great musician's door.

From behind the little green door, long runs and wiggles and cascades of tinkling notes came dancing out into the quiet of the deserted marble corridor. The youth knocked yet again. Presently the notes ceased, and, opening the door with a stately bow, the court musician invited the young wanderer within.

And now the youth found himself in a pleasant room, painted a fair apple-green and set about with panels edged with gold; the furniture, too, was painted green and gold, and there were flowered curtains, a dozing cat, and a china bowl. As for the court musician, he was clad in a superb costume of the most fashionable lavender brocade.

"Honored Master," said the little minstrel respectfully, "I am roaming the world for a tune so pleasant and merry that, once men have heard it, they can never be sad or bad or unhappy again. Pray do you know this wonderful tune?"

"Yes, indeed, I know many a wonderful tune," replied the court musician. "Listen, now, was it this?" And, seating himself at a gay green-and-gold harpsichord, the court musician played a merry song full of the most elegant tinkles and trills.

"No, I am sure that is not the wonderful tune," said the little minstrel, looking through an open window at tiny clouds sailing the sunny sky of a mild midwinter day.

"Then surely this is it," said the court musician, playing a second merry tune.

But the little minstrel shook his head once more.

“Dear me, dear me! Not the wonderful tune?” exclaimed the court musician, wrinkling his brow and pursing his lips. “Ah! Wait! I think I have it!” And this time he lifted the cover of the green-and-gold harpsichord so that the minstrel could see the little picture of frolicking shepherds painted upon it, and played a long, harmonious, and majestic strain.

But the little minstrel shook his head again.

“My young friend,” said the court musician, with something of a fatherly air, closing the harpsichord as he spoke, “I have played for you the only three tunes I know which might be the wonderful tune. Are you quite sure you are not wasting your life upon this quest? Perhaps such a tune as you tell of was once known in the world, and is only hidden away; yet again, perhaps it is all only a dream. You should go to the Kingdom of Music, and inquire.”

“The Kingdom of Music,” cried the youth. “I’ve never heard of such a realm. Pray, sir, by what road does one go?”

“Come!” said the court musician, taking the youth by the arm and leading him to the open window. “See you that land of blue cloud-capped hills at the world’s edge, and the broad and winding river which disappears among them? You have but to follow that stream. Farewell, young friend, the world is before you, and may you find the wonderful tune!”

League after league and day after day, the little minstrel followed the winding river, till spring stood upon the hills. And now, with the first sight of the new leaves, the little minstrel arrived in the land of melody. It was a goodly land, this Kingdom of Music--a rolling land of great fields, sweeping cloud-shadows, and ancient oaken groves: a land of pleasant murmurs and sweet sounds. Only birds with pretty songs dwelt in the Kingdom of Music, and they sang more sweetly there than in any other kingdom of the world; the very crickets had a more tuneful chirp, the river a more various music, and even the winds blew merry tunes as they whistled through the trees.

Rejoicing in the kingdom and its sounds, the little minstrel was strolling along, half in a dream, when of a sudden sky and land were filled with a strange, huge, earth-shaking sound, a sound of the

scraping of thousands of fiddles; of the blowing of thousands of horns, flutes, trumpets, trombones, and clarinets; of the clashing and clanging and thumping and bethumping of thousands of bass drums, kettle-drums, and cymbals; indeed, in all his wanderings the little minstrel had never heard such a din.

The King of the Kingdom of Music was rehearsing his orchestra.

Every single person in the kingdom, whether man, woman, or child, was a member of this orchestra. Babies alone were excepted, though on one occasion the King had made use of a gifted child with a musical howl!

Now, when the rehearsal had come to an end and quiet had returned to the land, the little minstrel made his way to the royal city, obtained an audience with the King, and asked for news of the wonderful tune.

"The wonderful tune," said the King from his throne, nodding gravely. "Yes, once there was even such a wonderful tune! In those days peace and plenty reigned in the world, and everyone was happy at his task beneath the sun. One luckless eve, alas! the tune in some manner happened to get broken up into notes; and before anyone could help it, these notes were scattered and lost through all the kingdoms of the world. Young man, I fear your search is in vain; never more shall the sons and daughters of men hear the wonderful tune."

"But perhaps someone might gather the notes together again," said the little minstrel eagerly.

"Many have tried to do so," replied the King. "Of those who fared away, some returned weary in the days of their youth, others crept back in old age, and others yet were lost forevermore. And never a one returned with a single note of the wonderful tune."

"Then is the time come for a new search," cried out the little minstrel bravely. "Farewell, O King of the Kingdom of Music, for I must be off gathering the notes in the highways of the world."

"Farewell, good youth," answered the King. "Return to us when your quest is ended; and may you come piping the wonderful tune."

And now the little minstrel found himself on the roads of the world again, strolling from the first chill gold-and-gray of laggard dawns to the twilight world of meadows in the gathering dark and village bells sounding faintly afar.

Seven long years rolled over the world; the little minstrel searched diligently and far and wide, yet never a trace could he find of a single note of the wonderful tune. His blue coat, which had been so gay, was now sadly tattered and torn; even his penny-pipe had a dent in it, and his shoes, alas! were scarce worth the putting-on in the morn.

Now it came to pass, on a day in the early winter, that the little minstrel arrived in a northern land and followed a woodland road through the silence and the cold. The sky was overcast with a wide tent of dull gray cloud, through which a sun swam, cold as a moon; and the whole world was very still--so still indeed that the only sound the little minstrel could hear was the scattering of the leaves beneath his feet. Twilight came, and found the little minstrel far from a house or village; a cold wind arose, and presently a thick snow began to fall. And now the night and the snow closed in upon the wanderer. Huddled in his ragged cloak, the little minstrel trudged bravely on into the whirling storm; but little by little the cold crept into his body and bones, a weariness and a hunger for sleep overcame him, and suddenly he sank unknowing in the brambles by the road.

When he opened his eyes again, a great open fire was burning before him on a huge hearth; a blue mug of steaming milk lay waiting at one side; and over him there bent anxiously two kindly young folk--a sturdy country-lad in a green smock, and a pretty lass in a dress of homespun brown. These twain were a young husband and wife who lived in a little house in the wood, loving each other dearly, working contentedly at their daily tasks, and dealing hospitably and generously with all. Returning through the storm from a distant sheepfold, the young countryman had found the little minstrel lying in the snow and had carried him on his shoulders to the shelter of his home.

After a few days had passed, and the little minstrel felt quite himself again, he told his generous friends of his search for the notes of the wonderful tune. It was at night that he told of his quest; the supper had been cleared away, the house was still, and the little minstrel and his hosts were gathered by the fire.

"A note of the wonderful tune--bless me, but I think we have one in this house!" exclaimed the young wife. And she went to the mantel and fished about in an ancient brown bowl standing in the gloom. "Yes, here it is, sure enough--a note of the wonderful tune!"

And thus did it come to pass that the little minstrel obtained the

first note of the wonderful tune; for the young husband and wife were quick to make a gift of it to their guest.

But now you must hear how he found all the notes save the last.

The second note the little minstrel discovered on a glorious midsummer day. It had lain in an old bird's-nest in the heart of a great tree, and a chance breeze tumbled nest and note together at the minstrel's feet.

The third note had been hidden away amid the books of a famous scholar who lived all alone in an ancient tower, gathering the wisdom of the world.

The fourth note was given the minstrel by a little child whose toy it was.

The fifth note was turned up out of the earth, on a spring morning, by a whistling ploughman who saw the minstrel passing by and called to him to come and see the strange thing he had found.

The sixth note the minstrel had of a weaver, who labored in his own house at his own loom and upon it wove fair and beautiful things.

The seventh note a great nobleman possessed; he dwelt in his castle free of little fears and mean rivalries; and truth and courage and honor were his squires.

The eighth note the minstrel had of a young sailor, who chanced to discover it in an old ship that sailed the seas.

Of the ninth and last note, however, there was still no sign; so the little minstrel put the eight others into his pocket that had no hole in it, and turned again to his quest. And presently he walked over a hill into the Kingdom of the Blue Lakes, where reigned the Lady Amoret.

Now the Kingdom of the Blue Lakes was quite the fairest of all the kingdoms of the world, and Amoret the fairest Queen. Her palace stood on an open hill by her kingdom's eastern bound; of golden-white marble was it made, and from its terrace one looked westward to distant mountains over a woodland bright with lakes. All day long there a gay court of lords and ladies in silks and fine array held festival; the music of lutes and violins was ever to be heard; and scarce an hour there was but had its pleasure, and scarce a pleasure but had its hour.

Clad in a queen's robe of scarlet and cloth of gold, and seated in a jeweled throne raised upon the terrace, the Lady Amoret received the ragged pilgrim of the tune.

"The last note of the wonderful tune?" said the Lady Amoret. "Seek no more; it is here. Beyond the palace domain, by a lake in the depths of the wildwood, my court fool has built for himself a bower, and upon its wall hangs the last note of the wonderful tune. Tarry with us a while, and you shall have it. I promise you."

"May I not go this very instant and find it, Your Majesty?" asked the little minstrel anxiously. "Long have I roamed the world in search of it, and I need it so for the tune!"

"Nay, tarry a while," answered the Queen, unyielding; "for even were I to bid you go, you would never find the bower, so cunningly is it hidden in the wood. You have wandered long and afar, good friend; tarry now a while from your quest. My kingdom is the fairest in the world, and you shall have all you desire."

And Amoret gave a command that new apparel of the fairest blue cloth be prepared for the little minstrel and that a place be set for him at the royal board.

Now it came to pass that, as the Lady Amoret and her court beheld how brave a youth the little minstrel appeared in his new apparel, and hearkened to the thousand wonderful tales he had to tell of his quest, they found him the best company in the world and determined to hold him in the realm. To this end, therefore, they strove to drown the memory of his quest in a tide of gayest merriments; but, in spite of feasts and festivals, the little minstrel never once forgot the last note of the wonderful tune.

Try as he might, the little minstrel could never find the note. Again and again he had tried to make his way to the fool's bower, only to lose himself in the tangled paths of the wildwood; again and again he had questioned the court fool, only to be met with a mocking courtesy, a finger to the lips, and a jesting wink of the eye. One day he even ventured to remind the Lady Amoret of her promise, but she only laughed at him for his impatience and swept him off in her golden boat to a pageant on the lakes.

Now it happened on the following morning that the Lady Amoret, taking

counsel with her court, determined to destroy the note, lest the minstrel should discover it, and go. Summoning the captain of the palace guard before her, she said to him:--

“Go to-night to the bower of the court fool; take the last note of the wonderful tune, and fling it into the depths of the lake.”

* * * * *

And now it was night, and the lords and ladies of the court, strolling forth from dinner, walked through the palace to the terrace of the west. A storm was gathering afar, an approaching thunder growled, and lightning, flashing in the sky, was mirrored in the waters of the lakes. Presently there came wind and a patter of rain, and soldiers of the palace guard entered to close the windows and the doors.

The little minstrel stood apart by a great window, gazing forth into the darkness and the storm. His fine new clothes weighed like lead upon his shoulders; his jeweled neckcloth scarce left him free to breathe; and with all his heart he longed for his rags, his liberty, and the cool rain on his eyes.

But the last note--he could not leave that behind. Suddenly he heard one soldier say to another:--

“Our companions will be caught in the storm; they have ridden forth with the captain to the fool’s bower, to destroy the last note of the wonderful tune.”

“Oh, the note, the note, my note! Oh, what shall I do?” cried the minstrel, his heart sinking into depths of despair. “Even now it may be lost to the world--this time forever! I must find the court fool; he shall tell me where the bower lies!” And he looked about in the splendid throng for the fantastic motley of the fool; but he saw only many in rich garments, and the gleam of jewels reflecting many lights.

Suddenly he chanced to recall that the court fool dwelt in the garret of the palace, so up great and little stairs he fled to the fool’s chamber in the eaves. The rain was now falling in torrents on the roof close overhead, and all at once a terrible peal of thunder shook the palace to its depths. Never pausing to knock, the little minstrel burst in at the door.

Candles were burning within the humble chamber, lightning flared at an

oval window, and the court fool stood in the centre of the floor, still in his motley clad.

“My friend,” said the court fool, with a low bow and a mocking smile, “allow me to present you with the last note of the wonderful tune.” And with those words he handed the note to the very much astonished youth.

“I feared lest mishap destroy it,” continued the court fool, “so yestereve I took it from my bower. You see, I believe in the wonderful tune; and without my note, this last note, your tune would scarce be worth the playing. And now, your hand, little minstrel, for you must hurry away at once through the wind and rain.”

So the minstrel pressed the hand of the court fool and, hastening down a tiny corner staircase, went forth into the storm. And as he fled, he cried aloud to the thunder and the rain and the wild wind:--

“The wonderful tune, the wonderful tune! I have it, I have it--the wonderful tune!”

And now the storm wore itself away, the summer stars shone forth in the clearest of blue skies, and the only sound to be heard was the rain drip-dripping from the trees. Drenched to the skin, but with a fire of joy in his heart, the minstrel hurried through the night toward the Kingdom of Music far away.

When he arrived there, on a summer’s morning, he found the people of the palace assembled in the hall of state, and the King upon his throne.

“I have it, Your Majesty!” cried out the little minstrel breathlessly; “I have it, every note; here is the wonderful tune!”

“What! The wonderful tune?” cried the King, leaping to his feet. “Quick, somebody, ring all the bells, send trumpeters through the streets, assemble the orchestra, and call hither the Violinist-in-Chief, the Lord Organist, and the Grand Harper. We shall play it over at once!”

* * * * *

“H-m,” said the Violinist-in-Chief, after he had put on his huge spectacles and studied the wonderful tune, “Don’t you feel that those last bars ought to be played very fast, like this:

tum-diddy-tum--tum-diddy-tum--tum-diddy-tum--diddy-dum-dum-dum?"

[Illustration: _"No, I do not agree with you," shouted the Lord Organist_]

"No, I do _not_ agree with you," replied the Lord Organist, a huge personage with a majestic air and a bad temper. "Those bars should be played slowly," here he waved a large, solemn finger, "like this: tum--tum--tum--tum--tum--tum--tum--tum--tum!"

"You are both entirely wrong," interrupted the Grand Harper, a short contradictory fellow with long arms and long fingers. "To my way of thinking the entire tune should be played throughout in the same time, in this fashion; listen to my tapping now: da-da--dee-dee--da-da--dee-dee--da-da--dee-do-dum."

"Impossible! Absurd! No, never!" cried the Lord Organist and the Violinist-in-Chief in one long indignant breath. "We appeal to the King!"

But the King had ideas of his own on the matter.

And thus it was that the musicians all took to quarreling as to how the wonderful tune should be played, and are quarreling still.

But some day they will make up their minds as to how it should go; the little minstrel will leave the Kingdom of Music and come through the world piping the tune; and then, oh, then, what times there will be!

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THE SUNKEN TREASURE

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

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The Junior Classics, Vol 7, by Various

Picture to yourselves a handsome, old-fashioned room, with a large, open cupboard at one end, in which is displayed a magnificent gold cup, with some other splendid articles of gold and silver plate. In another part of the room, opposite to a tall looking-glass, stands our beloved chair, newly polished, and adorned with a gorgeous cushion of crimson velvet, tufted with gold.

In the chair sits a man of strong and sturdy frame, whose face has been roughened by northern tempests and blackened by the burning sun of the West Indies. He wears an immense periwig, flowing down over his shoulders. His coat has a wide embroidery of golden foliage; and his waistcoat, likewise, is all flowered over and bedizened with gold. His red, rough hands, which have done many a good day's work with the hammer and adze, are half covered by the delicate lace ruffles at his wrists. On a table lies his silver-hilted sword; and in the corner of the room stands his gold-headed cane, made of a beautifully polished West India wood. Somewhat such an aspect as this did Phips present when he sat in Grandfather's chair after the king had appointed him Governor of Massachusetts.

But Sir William Phips had not always worn a gold-embroidered coat, nor always sat so much at his ease as he did in Grandfather's chair. He was a poor man's son, and was born in the province of Maine, where in his boyhood he used to tend sheep upon the hills. Until he

had grown to be a man, he did not even know how to read and write. Tired of tending sheep, he apprenticed himself to a ship-carpenter, and spent about four years in hewing the crooked limbs of oak trees into knees for vessels.

In 1673, when he was twenty-two years old, he came to Boston, and soon afterwards was married to a widow lady, who had property enough to set him up in business. It was not long before he lost all the money that he had acquired by his marriage, and became a poor man again. Still, he was not discouraged. He often told his wife that he should be very rich, and would build a "fair brick house" in the Green Lane of Boston.

Several years passed away; and Phips had not yet gained the riches which he promised to himself. During this time he had begun to follow the sea for a living. In the year 1684 he happened to hear of a Spanish ship which had been cast away near Porto de la Plata. She had now lain for fifty years beneath the waves. This old ship had been laden with immense wealth; and nobody had thought of the possibility of recovering any part of it from the deep sea which was rolling and tossing it about. But though it was now an old story, Phips resolved that the sunken treasure should again be brought to light.

He went to London and obtained admittance to King James. He told the king of the vast wealth that was lying at the bottom of the sea. King James listened with attention, and thought this a fine opportunity to fill his treasury with Spanish gold. He appointed William Phips to be captain of a vessel, called the Rose Algier, carrying eighteen guns and ninety-five men. So now he was Captain Phips of the English navy.

The captain sailed from England and cruised for two years in the West Indies, trying to find the wrecked Spanish ship. But the sea is so wide and deep that it is no easy matter to discover the exact spot where a sunken vessel lies. The prospect of success seemed very small, and most people thought that Phips was as far from having money enough to build a "fair brick house" as he was while he tended sheep.

The seamen became discouraged, and gave up all hope of making their fortunes by discovering the Spanish wreck. They wanted Phips to turn pirate. There was a much better prospect of growing rich by plundering vessels which still sailed in the sea than by seeking

for a ship that had lain beneath the waves full half a century. They broke out in open mutiny, but were finally mastered by Phips, and compelled to obey his orders. It would have been dangerous to continue much longer at sea with such a crew of mutinous sailors; and the ship was unseaworthy. So Phips judged it best to return to England.

Before leaving the West Indies, he met with an old Spaniard who remembered the wreck of the Spanish ship, and gave him directions how to find the very spot. It was on a reef of rocks, a few leagues from Porto de la Plata.

On his arrival in England Phips solicited the king to let him have another vessel and send him back again to the West Indies. But King James refused to have anything more to do with the affair. Phips might never have been able to renew the search if the Duke of Albemarle and some other noblemen had not lent their assistance.

They fitted out a ship, and he sailed from England, and arrived safely at La Plata, where he took an adze and assisted his men to build a large boat.

The boat was intended for going closer to the rocks than a large vessel could safely venture. When it was finished, the captain sent several men in it to examine the spot where the Spanish ship was said to have been wrecked. They were accompanied by some Indians, who were skilful divers, and could go down a great way into the depths of the sea.

The boat's crew proceeded to the reef of rocks, and gazed down into the transparent water. Nothing could they see more valuable than a curious sea shrub growing beneath the water, in a crevice of the reef of rocks. It flaunted to and fro with the swell and reflux of the waves, and looked as bright and beautiful as if its leaves were gold.

"We won't go back empty-handed," cried an English sailor; and then he spoke to one of the, Indian divers. "Dive down and bring me that pretty sea shrub there. That's the only treasure we shall find!"

Down plunged the diver, and soon rose dripping from the water, holding the sea shrub in his hand. But he had learned some news at the bottom of the sea. "There are some ship's guns," said he, the moment he had drawn breath, "some great cannon, among the rocks,

near where the shrub was growing."

No sooner had he spoken than the English sailors knew that they had found the spot where the Spanish galleon had been wrecked, so many years before. The other Indian divers plunged over the boat's side and swam headlong down, groping among the rocks and sunken cannon. In a few moments one of them rose above the water with a heavy lump of silver in his arms. That single lump was worth more than a thousand dollars. The sailors took it into the boat, and then rowed back as speedily as they could, being in haste to inform Captain Phips of their good luck.

But, confidently as the captain had hoped to find the Spanish wreck, yet, now that it was really found, the news seemed too good to be true. He could not believe it till the sailors showed him the lump of silver. "Thanks be to God!" then cries Phips. "We shall every man of us make our fortunes!"

Hereupon the captain and all the crew set to work, with iron rakes and great hooks and lines, fishing for gold and silver at the bottom of the sea. Up came the treasures in abundance. Now they beheld a table of solid silver, once the property of an old Spanish grandee. Now they found an altar vessel, which had been destined as a gift to some Catholic church. Now they drew up a golden cup, fit for the King of Spain to drink his wine out of. Now their rakes were loaded with masses of silver bullion. There were also precious stones among the treasure, glittering and sparkling, so that it is a wonder how their radiance could have been concealed.

After a day or two they discovered another part of the wreck where they found a great many bags of silver dollars. But nobody could have guessed that these were money-bags. By remaining so long in the salt-water they had become covered over with a crust which had the appearance of stone, so that it was necessary to break them in pieces with hammers and axes. When this was done, a stream of silver dollars gushed out upon the deck of the vessel.

The whole value of the recovered treasure, plate, bullion, precious stones, and all, was estimated at more than two millions of dollars. It was dangerous even to look at such a vast amount of wealth. A captain, who had assisted Phips in the enterprise, lost his reason at the sight of it. He died two years afterward, still raving about the treasures that lie at the bottom of the sea.

Phips and his men continued to fish up plate, bullion, and dollars, as plentifully as ever, till their provisions grew short. Then, as they could not feed upon gold and silver any more than old King Midas could, they found it necessary to go in search of food. Phips returned to England, arriving there in 1687, and was received with great joy by the Albemarle and other English lords who had fitted out the vessel. Well they might rejoice; for they took the greater part of the treasures to themselves.

The captain's share, however, was enough to make him comfortable for the rest of his days. It also enabled him to fulfil his promise to his wife, by building a "fair brick house" in the Green Lane of Boston. The Duke of Albemarle sent Mrs. Phips a magnificent gold cup, worth at least five thousand dollars. Before Captain Phips left London, King James made him a knight; so that, instead of the obscure ship-carpenter who had formerly dwelt among them, the inhabitants of Boston welcomed him on his return as the rich and famous Sir William Phips.

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PHAETON'S DRIVE IN THE SUN-CHARIOT

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The Junior Classics, by Various

Once upon a time there lived in sunny Greece a lad named Phaeton. He was a son of Clymene, an ocean nymph, and Apollo, the god of the sun.

One morning when the lad was playing with some of his companions he said, "It is my father who drives the glorious sun-car across the sky, and brings daylight into the world. I am the son of bright Apollo."

Now this was by no means the first time that Phaeton had boasted about his high lineage, for he was indeed very proud of his father. He was much surprised, however, to hear his playmates laugh. One of them looked scornfully at him and said, "You are telling us an idle tale. We do not believe that you are a child of the mighty Sun."

Another added quickly, "Why don't you prove your boast? If you are the son of Apollo give some sign of your heavenly birth."

Indignant at these taunts Phaeton sought his mother and told her about the jeering insults he had been obliged to bear.

"They refuse to believe what I say until I offer proof," he cried. "Let me go to the palace of the sun and speak to my father. He will advise me

how to prove my claim."

Clymene hesitated to grant this request because she knew the proposed journey was attended by many dangers; but finally she gave consent and carefully directed Phaeton to the abode of Apollo.

In the far east stood the shining sun palace wrought from burnished gold, bright silver, and polished ivory. The walls, marvellously designed, were thickly set in emeralds, rubies, sapphires and diamonds; the slender jewelled pinnacles shone with dazzling light.

Phaeton was awed by the splendour which he saw but he entered the palace and approached the sun god who sat on a glittering throne. Immediately Apollo greeted his son and asked what favour he sought. Encouraged by the question Phaeton lost all trace of fear and said, "O, Light of the World, the children of men declare that I am not the son of Apollo. They sneer at me and say that my claim is nothing but an idle boast. Grant me some means of proving to them that I am indeed a child of the mighty Sun."

Apollo laid aside the beams that shone on his brow, bade Phaeton come nearer to him, and said, "Thou art indeed my son. By the mighty river Styx I promise to grant thee any boon thou shalt ask."

Eagerly Phaeton replied, "For one day let me drive the sun-chariot across the sky. No one will ever again deny my high lineage if Apollo grant me this boon."

The sun-god immediately saw what a rash promise he had made. Three times he shook his bright head and then replied, "I beg thee, Phaeton, choose another boon for none but Phoebus Apollo can drive the horses of the sun-chariot. The path through high heaven is beset with dangers. First the steeds must climb the steep ascent of the eastern sky; then they must be guided through the middle way which is a dizzy height above earth and sea; and last of all, their path lies down the dangerous slope of the west. Also frightful monsters must be passed on the road through the sky. I beg thee choose another boon. This one may bring thee punishment instead of glory."

But Phaeton was not dissuaded, and finally Apollo led the headstrong youth to the place where the fire-breathing horses and brilliant chariot stood. The axle-tree, poles, and wheel-rims were gold; the spokes, silver. The body of the car was thickly set with chrysolites and diamonds which reflected the sun's brilliance. While Phaeton gazed

admiringly at all this beauty, Aurora the goddess of the Dawn threw open the purple doors of the East and pointed to the pathway strewn with roses. The Stars quickly withdrew and when the sun god saw the Moon make ready to depart he swiftly ordered the Hours to harness up the horses. Then Apollo quickly bound the Sun's rays on the impatient lad's brow and anointed his face with a cooling essence to protect his skin from the burning flames.

Phaeton leaped into the car, seized the reins, stood erect, and thanked Apollo for the great privilege of driving the chariot. In his eager haste to start the youth failed to note his father's words of warning. "Hold the reins firmly and be sparing of the whip. The steeds need no urging; the labour is to hold them in check. Do not drive too high for fear of burning the heavens; nor too low, or the earth will be set on fire. Keep in the well-worn ruts of the middle path. The time to start has come, for Night is passing out of the Western gates. Heed carefully my words in this hazardous journey."

With an impatient bound the fire-breathing steeds sprang forth. They dashed lightly over the clouds and outran the morning breezes in their eagerness to mount the eastern slope of the sky. In a little while they discovered that the car was lighter than usual, and that the sun-god was not holding the reins. Then they plunged madly forward and turned aside from the middle track. This headlong speed of the horses filled Phaeton's heart with terror, especially when he realized he had no power to guide them. He forgot the names of the horses; in despair he was obliged to let them take their own course. Nearer and nearer to the earth's broad plains dashed the chariot of the sun. The fountains and rivers were dried up by the scorching heat; the forest trees became withered and burned; the grassy hillsides, parched and brown; the harvest fields were set on fire, even the people of the land over which the sun chariot passed were blackened by the extreme heat, and to this day their descendants have dark skins.

In a loud cry of agony the people called on Jupiter, king of the gods, to save them from destruction. The all-powerful one aroused himself from a deep sleep and saw, at a glance, the cause of this terrible suffering. Angered at the thought that a youth should dare drive the horses of the sun, Jupiter hurled one of his deadliest thunderbolts at the unfortunate Phaeton, who fell from the chariot like a shooting star and sank into the depths of the river Eridanus.

Clymene deeply mourned her son's death, and Phaeton's three sisters bewailed his loss for many days. Finally the gods, in pity, changed them

into poplar trees, in order that they might always be near the river into which Phaeton fell.



CHARLOTTE'S LADIES

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Lucy Maud Montgomery Short Stories, 1909 to 1922

Just as soon as dinner was over at the asylum, Charlotte sped away to the gap in the fence--the northwest corner gap. There was a gap in the southeast corner, too--the asylum fence was in a rather poor condition--but the southeast gap was interesting only after tea, and it was never at any time quite as interesting as the northwest gap.

Charlotte ran as fast as her legs could carry her, for she did not want any of the other orphans to see her. As a rule, Charlotte liked the company of the other orphans and was a favourite with them. But, somehow, she did not want them to know about the gaps. She was sure they would not understand.

Charlotte had discovered the gaps only a week before. They had not been there in the autumn, but the snowdrifts had lain heavily against the fence all winter, and one spring day when Charlotte was creeping through the shrubbery in the northwest corner in search of the little yellow daffodils that always grew there in spring, she found a delightful space where a board had fallen off, whence she could look out on a bit of woody road with a little footpath winding along by the fence under the widespreading boughs of the asylum trees.

Charlotte felt a wild impulse to slip out and run fast and far down that lovely, sunny, tempting, fenceless road. But that would have been wrong, for it was against the asylum rules, and Charlotte, though she hated most of the asylum rules with all her heart, never disobeyed or broke them. So she subdued the vagrant longing with a sigh and sat down among the daffodils to peer wistfully out of the gap and feast her eyes on this glimpse of a world where there were no brick walls and prim walks and never-varying rules.

Then, as Charlotte watched, the Pretty Lady with the Blue Eyes came along the footpath. Charlotte had never seen her before and hadn't the slightest idea in the world who she was, but that was what she called her as soon as she saw her. The lady was so pretty, with lovely blue eyes that were very sad, although somehow as you looked at them you felt that they ought to be laughing, merry eyes instead. At least Charlotte thought so and wished at once that she knew how to make them laugh. Besides, the Lady had lovely golden hair and the most beautiful pink cheeks, and Charlotte, who had mouse-coloured hair and any number of freckles, had an unbounded admiration for golden locks and roseleaf complexions. The Lady was dressed in black, which Charlotte didn't like, principally because the matron of the asylum wore black and Charlotte didn't--exactly--like the matron.

When the Pretty Lady with the Blue Eyes had gone by, Charlotte drew a long breath.

"If I could pick out a mother I'd pick out one that looked just like her," she said.

Nice things sometimes happen close together, even in an orphan asylum, and that very evening Charlotte discovered the southeast gap and found herself peering into the most beautiful garden you could imagine, a garden where daffodils and tulips grew in great ribbon-like beds, and there were hedges of white and purple lilacs, and winding paths under blossoming trees. It was such a garden as Charlotte had pictured in happy dreams and never expected to see in real life. And yet here it had been all the time, divided from her only by a high board fence.

"I wouldn't have s'posed there could be such a lovely place so near an orphan asylum," mused Charlotte. "It's the very loveliest place I ever saw. Oh, I do wish I could go and walk in it. Well, I do declare! If there isn't a lady in it, too!"

Sure enough, there was a lady, helping an unruly young vine to run in

the way it should go over a little arbour. Charlotte instantly named her the Tall Lady with the Black Eyes. She was not nearly so young or so pretty as the Lady with the Blue Eyes, but she looked very kind and jolly.

I'd like her for an aunt, reflected Charlotte. Not for a mother--oh, no, not for a mother, but for an aunt. I know she'd make a splendid aunt. And, oh, just look at her cat!

Charlotte looked at the cat with all her might and main. She loved cats, but cats were not allowed in an orphan asylum, although Charlotte sometimes wondered if there were no orphan kittens in the world which would be appropriate for such an institution.

The Tall Lady's cat was so big and furry, with a splendid tail and elegant stripes. A Very Handsome Cat, Charlotte called him mentally, seeing the capitals as plainly as if they had been printed out. Charlotte's fingers tingled to stroke his glossy coat, but she folded them sternly together.

"You know you can't," she said to herself reproachfully, "so what is the use of wanting to, Charlotte Turner? You ought to be thankful just to see the garden and the Very Handsome Cat."

Charlotte watched the Tall Lady and the Cat until they went away into a fine, big house further up the garden, then she sighed and went back through the cherry trees to the asylum playground, where the other orphans were playing games. But, somehow, games had lost their flavour compared with those fascinating gaps.

It did not take Charlotte long to discover that the Pretty Lady always walked past the northwest gap about one o'clock every day and never at any other time--at least at no other time when Charlotte was free to watch her; and that the Tall Lady was almost always in her garden at five in the afternoon, accompanied by the Very Handsome Cat, pruning and trimming some of her flowers. Charlotte never missed being at the gaps at the proper times, if she could possibly manage it, and her heart was full of dreams about her two Ladies. But the other orphans thought all the fun had gone out of her, and the matron noticed her absent-mindedness and dosed her with sulphur and molasses for it. Charlotte took the dose meekly, as she took everything else. It was all part and parcel with being an orphan in an asylum.

"But if the Pretty Lady with the Blue Eyes was my mother, she wouldn't

make me swallow such dreadful stuff," sighed Charlotte. "I don't believe even the Tall Lady with the Black Eyes would--though perhaps she might, aunts not being quite as good as mothers."

"Do you know," said Maggie Brunt, coming up to Charlotte at this moment, "that Lizzie Parker is going to be adopted? A lady is going to adopt her."

"Oh!" cried Charlotte breathlessly. An adoption was always a wonderful event in the asylum, as well as a somewhat rare one. "Oh, how splendid!"

"Yes, isn't it?" said Maggie enviously. "She picked out Lizzie because she was pretty and had curls. I don't think it is fair."

Charlotte sighed. "Nobody will ever want to adopt me, because I've mousy hair and freckles," she said. "But somebody may want you some day, Maggie. You have such lovely black hair."

"But it isn't curly," said Maggie forlornly. "And the matron won't let me put it up in curl papers at night. I just wish I was Lizzie."

Charlotte shook her head. "I don't. I'd love to be adopted, but I wouldn't really like to be anybody but myself, even if I am homely. It's better to be yourself with mousy hair and freckles than somebody else who is ever so beautiful. But I do envy Lizzie, though the matron says it is wicked to envy anyone."

Envy of the fortunate Lizzie did not long possess Charlotte's mind, however, for that very day a wonderful thing happened at noon hour by the northwest gap. Charlotte had always been very careful not to let the Pretty Lady see her, but today, after the Pretty Lady had gone past, Charlotte leaned out of the gap to watch her as far as she could. And just at that very moment the Pretty Lady looked back; and there, peering at her from the asylum fence, was a little scrap of a girl, with mouse-coloured hair and big freckles, and the sweetest, brightest, most winsome little face the Pretty Lady had ever seen. The Pretty Lady smiled right down at Charlotte and for just a moment her eyes looked as Charlotte had always known they ought to look. Charlotte was feeling rather frightened down in her heart but she smiled bravely back.

"Are you thinking of running away?" said the Pretty Lady, and, oh, what a sweet voice she had--sweet and tender, just like a mother's

voice ought to be!

"No," said Charlotte, shaking her head gravely. "I should like to run away but it would be of no use, because there is no place to run to."

"Why would you like to run away?" asked the Pretty Lady, still smiling. "Don't you like living here?"

Charlotte opened her big eyes very widely. "Why, it's an orphan asylum!" she exclaimed. "Nobody could like living in an orphan asylum. But, of course, orphans should be very thankful to have any place to live in and I _am_ thankful. I'd be thankfuller still if the matron wouldn't make me take sulphur and molasses. If you had a little girl, would you make her take sulphur and molasses?"

"I didn't when I had a little girl," said the Pretty Lady wistfully, and her eyes were sad again.

"Oh, did you really have a little girl once?" asked Charlotte softly.

"Yes, and she died," said the Pretty Lady in a trembling voice.

"Oh, I am sorry," said Charlotte, more softly still. "Did she--did she have lovely golden hair and pink cheeks like yours?"

"No," the Pretty Lady smiled again, though it was a very sad smile. "No, she had mouse-coloured hair and freckles."

"Oh! And weren't you sorry?"

"No, I was glad of it, because it made her look like her father. I've always loved little girls with mouse-coloured hair and freckles ever since. Well, I must hurry along. I'm late now, and schools have a dreadful habit of going in sharp on time. If you should happen to be here tomorrow, I'm going to stop and ask your name."

Of course Charlotte was at the gap the next day and they had a lovely talk. In a week they were the best of friends. Charlotte soon found out that she could make the Pretty Lady's eyes look as they ought to for a little while at least, and she spent all her spare time and lay awake at nights devising speeches to make the Pretty Lady laugh.

Then another wonderful thing happened. One evening when Charlotte went to the southeast gap, the Tall Lady with the Black Eyes was not in the

garden--at least, Charlotte thought she wasn't. But the Very Handsome Cat was, sitting gravely under a syringa bush and looking quite proud of himself for being a cat.

"You Very Handsome Cat," said Charlotte, "won't you come here and let me stroke you?"

The Very Handsome Cat did come, just as if he understood English, and he purred with delight when Charlotte took him in her arms and buried her face in his fur. Then--Charlotte thought she would really sink into the ground, for the Tall Lady herself came around a lilac bush and stood before the gap.

"Please, ma'am," stammered Charlotte in an agony of embarrassment, "I wasn't meaning to do any harm to your Very Handsome Cat. I just wanted to pat him. I--I am very fond of cats and they are not allowed in orphan asylums."

"I've always thought asylums weren't run on proper principles," said the Tall Lady briskly. "Bless your heart, child, don't look so scared. You're welcome to pat the cat all you like. Come in and I'll give you some flowers."

"Thank you, but I am not allowed to go off the grounds," said Charlotte firmly, "and I think I'd rather not have any flowers because the matron might want to know where I got them, and then she would have this gap closed up. I live in mortal dread for fear it will be closed anyhow. It's very uncomfortable--living in mortal dread."

The Tall Lady laughed a very jolly laugh. "Yes, I should think it would be," she agreed. "I haven't had that experience."

Then they had a jolly talk, and every evening after that Charlotte went to the gap and stroked the Very Handsome Cat and chatted to the Tall Lady.

"Do you live all alone in that big house?" she asked wonderingly one day.

"All alone," said the Tall Lady.

"Did you always live alone?"

"No. I had a sister living with me once. But I don't want to talk

about her. You'll oblige me, Charlotte, by not talking about her."

"I won't then," agreed Charlotte. "I can understand why people don't like to have their sisters talked about sometimes. Lily Mitchell has a big sister who was sent to jail for stealing. Of course Lily doesn't like to talk about her."

The Tall Lady laughed a little bitterly. "My sister didn't steal. She married a man I detested, that's all."

"Did he drink?" asked Charlotte gravely. "The matron's husband drank and that was why she left him and took to running an orphan asylum. I think I'd rather put up with a drunken husband than live in an orphan asylum."

"My sister's husband didn't drink," said the Tall Lady grimly. "He was beneath her, that was all. I told her I'd never forgive her and I never shall. He's dead now--he died a year after she married him--and she's working for her living. I dare say she doesn't find it very pleasant. She wasn't brought up to that. Here, Charlotte, is a turnover for you. I made it on purpose for you. Eat it and tell me if you don't think I'm a good cook. I'm dying for a compliment. I never get any now that I've got old. It's a dismal thing to get old and have nobody to love you except a cat, Charlotte."

"I think it is just as bad to be young and have nobody to love you, not even a cat," sighed Charlotte, enjoying the turnover, nevertheless.

"I dare say it is," agreed the Tall Lady, looking as if she had been struck by a new and rather startling idea.

* * * * *

I like the tall lady with the Black Eyes ever so much, thought Charlotte that night as she lay in bed, but I love the Pretty Lady. I have more fun with the Tall Lady and the Very Handsome Cat, but I always feel nicer with the Pretty Lady. Oh, I'm so glad her little girl had mouse-coloured hair.

Then the most wonderful thing of all happened. One day a week later the Pretty Lady said, "Would you like to come and live with me, Charlotte?"

Charlotte looked at her. "Are you in earnest?" she asked in a whisper.

"Indeed I am. I want you for my little girl, and if you'd like to come, you shall. I'm poor, Charlotte, really, I'm dreadfully poor, but I can make my salary stretch far enough for two, and we'll love each other enough to cover the thin spots. Will you come?"

"Well, I should just think I will!" said Charlotte emphatically. "Oh, I wish I was sure I'm not dreaming. I do love you so much, and it will be so delightful to be your little girl."

"Very well, sweetheart. I'll come tomorrow afternoon--it is Saturday, so I'll have the whole blessed day off--and see the matron about it. Oh, we'll have lovely times together, dearest. I only wish I'd discovered you long ago."

Charlotte may have eaten and studied and played and kept rules the rest of that day and part of the next, but, if so, she has no recollection of it. She went about like a girl in a dream, and the matron concluded that something more than sulphur and molasses was needed and decided to speak to the doctor about her. But she never did, because a lady came that afternoon and told her she wanted to adopt Charlotte.

Charlotte obeyed the summons to the matron's room in a tingle of excitement. But when she went in, she saw only the matron and the Tall Lady with the Black Eyes. Before Charlotte could look around for the Pretty Lady the matron said, "Charlotte, this lady, Miss Herbert, wishes to adopt you. It is a splendid thing for you, and you ought to be a very thankful little girl."

Charlotte's head fairly whirled. She clasped her hands and the tears brimmed up in her eyes.

"Oh, I like the Tall Lady," she gasped, "but I _love_ the Pretty Lady and I promised her I'd be her little girl. I can't break my promise."

"What on earth is the child talking about?" said the mystified matron.

And just then the maid showed in the Pretty Lady. Charlotte flew to her and flung her arms about her.

"Oh, tell them I am your little girl!" she begged. "Tell them I promised you first. I don't want to hurt the Tall Lady's feelings

because I truly do like her so very much. But I want to be your little girl."

The Pretty Lady had given one glance at the Tall Lady and flushed red. The Tall Lady, on the contrary, had grown very pale. The matron felt uncomfortable. Everybody knew that Miss Herbert and Mrs. Bond hadn't spoken to each other for years, even if they were sisters and alone in the world except for each other.

Mrs. Bond turned to the matron. "I have come to ask permission to adopt this little girl," she said.

"Oh, I'm very sorry," stammered the matron, "but Miss Herbert has just asked for her, and I have consented."

Charlotte gave a great gulp of disappointment, but the Pretty Lady suddenly wheeled around to face the Tall Lady, with quivering lips and tearful eyes.

"Don't take her from me, Alma," she pleaded humbly. "She--she is so like my own baby and I'm so lonely. Any other child will suit you as well."

"Not at all," said the Tall Lady brusquely. "Not at all, Anna. No other child will suit me at all. And may I ask what you intend to keep her on? I know your salary is barely enough for yourself."

"That is my concern," said the Pretty Lady a little proudly.

"Humph!" The Tall Lady shrugged her shoulders. "Just as independent as ever, Anna, I see. Well, child, what do you say? Which of us will you come with? Remember, I have the cat on my side, and Anna can't make half as good turnovers as I can. Remember all this, Charlotte."

"Oh, I--I like you so much," stammered Charlotte, "and I wish I could live with you both. But since I can't, I must go with the Pretty Lady, because I promised, and because I loved her first."

"And best?" queried the Tall Lady.

"And best," admitted Charlotte, bound to be truthful, even at the risk of hurting the Tall Lady's feelings. "But I do like you, too--next best. And you really don't need me as much as she does, for you have your Very Handsome Cat and she hasn't anything."

"A cat no longer satisfies the aching void in my soul," said the Tall Lady stubbornly. "Nothing will satisfy it but a little girl with mouse-coloured hair and freckles. No, Anna, I've got to have Charlotte. But I think that with her usual astuteness, she has already solved the problem for us by saying she'd like to live with us both. Why can't she? You just come back home and we'll let bygones be bygones. We both have something to forgive, but I was an obstinate old fool and I've known it for years, though I never confessed it to anybody but the cat."

The Pretty Lady softened, trembled, smiled. She went right up to the Tall Lady and put her arms about her neck.

"Oh, I've wanted so much to be friends with you again," she sobbed. "But I thought you would never relent--and--and--I've been so lonely--"

"There, there," whispered the Tall Lady, "don't cry under the matron's eye. Wait till we get home. I may have some crying to do myself then. Charlotte, go and get your hat and come right over with us. We can sign the necessary papers later on, but we must have you right off. The cat is waiting for you on the back porch, and there is a turnover cooling on the pantry window that is just your size."

"I am so happy," remarked Charlotte, "that I feel like crying myself."

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THE STORY OF RUTH, THE GLEANER
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Compiled by Logan Marshall

In the time of the Judges in Israel, a man named Elimelech was living in the town of Bethlehem, in the tribe of Judah, about six miles south of Jerusalem. His wife's name was Naomi, and his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. For some years the crops were poor, and food was scarce in Judah; and Elimelech with his family went to live in the land of Moab, which was on the east of the Dead Sea, as Judah was on the west.

There they stayed ten years, and in that time Elimelech died. His two sons married women of the country of Moab, one named Orpah, the other named Ruth. But the two young men also died in the land of Moab; so that Naomi and her two daughters-in-law were all left widows.

Naomi heard that God had again given good harvests and bread to the land of Judah, and she rose up to go from Moab back to her own land and her own town of Bethlehem. The two daughters-in-law loved her, and both would have gone with her, though the land of Judah was a strange land to them, for they were of the Moabite people.

Naomi said to them: "Go back, my daughters, to your own mothers' homes. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have been kind to your husbands and to me. May the Lord grant that each of you may yet find

another husband and a happy home."

Then Naomi kissed them in farewell, and the three women all wept together. The two young widows said to her:

"You have been a good mother to us, and we will go with you, and live among your people."

"No, no," said Naomi. "You are young, and I am old. Go back and be happy among your own people."

Then Orpah kissed Naomi, and went back to her people; but Ruth would not leave her. She said:

"Do not ask me to leave you, for I never will. Where you go, I will go; where you live, I will live; your people shall be my people; and your God shall be my God. Where you die, I will die, and be buried. Nothing but death itself shall part you and me."

When Naomi saw that Ruth was firm in her purpose, she ceased trying to persuade her; so the two women went on together. They walked around the Dead Sea, and crossed the river Jordan, and climbed the mountains of Judah, and came to Bethlehem.

Naomi had been absent from Bethlehem for ten years, but her friends were all glad to see her again. They said:

"Is this Naomi, whom we knew years ago?"

Now the name Naomi means "pleasant." And Naomi said:

"Call me not Naomi; call me Mara, for the Lord has made my life bitter. I went out full, with my husband and two sons; now I come home empty, without them. Do not call me 'Pleasant,' call me 'Bitter.'"

The name "Mara," by which Naomi wished to be called means "bitter." But Naomi learned later that "Pleasant" was the right name after all.

There was living in Bethlehem at that time a very rich man named Boaz. He owned large fields that were abundant in their harvests; and he was related to the family of Elimelech, Naomi's husband, who had died.

It was the custom in Israel when they reaped the grain not to gather all the stalks, but to leave some for the poor people, who followed after

the reapers with their sickles, and gathered what was left. When Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem, it was the time of the barley harvest; and Ruth went out into the fields to glean the grain which the reapers had left. It so happened that she was gleaning in the field that belonged to Boaz, this rich man.

Boaz came out from the town to see his men reaping, and he said to them, "The Lord be with you"; and they answered him, "The Lord bless you."

And Boaz said to his master of the reapers: "Who is this young woman that I see gleaning in the field?"

The man answered: "It is the young woman from the land of Moab, who came with Naomi. She asked leave to glean after the reapers, and has been here gathering grain since yesterday."

Then Boaz said to Ruth: "Listen to me, my daughter. Do not go to any other field, but stay here with my young women. No one shall harm you; and when you are thirsty, go and drink at our vessels of water."

[Illustration: _Ruth went out into the fields to glean the grain_]

Then Ruth bowed to Boaz, and thanked him for his kindness, all the more kind because she was a stranger in Israel. Boaz said: "I have heard how true you have been to your mother-in-law Naomi, in leaving your own land and coming with her to this land. May the Lord, under whose wings you have come, give you a reward!"

And at noon, when they sat down to rest and to eat, Boaz gave her some of the food. And he said to the reapers:

"When you are reaping, leave some of the sheaves for her; and drop out some sheaves from the bundles, where she may gather them."

That evening, Ruth showed Naomi how much she had gleaned, and told her of the rich man Boaz, who had been so kind to her. And Naomi said:

"This man is a near relation of ours. Stay in his fields, as long as the harvest lasts." And so Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz until the harvest had been gathered.

At the end of the harvest, Boaz held a feast on the threshing-floor. And after the feast, by the advice of Naomi, Ruth went to him, and said to

him:

"You are a near relation of my husband and of his father, Elimelech. Now will you not do good to us for his sake?"

And when Boaz saw Ruth, he loved her; and soon after this he took her as his wife. And Naomi and Ruth went to live in his home; so that Naomi's life was no more bitter, but pleasant. And Boaz and Ruth had a son, whom they named Obed; and later Obed had a son named Jesse; and Jesse was the father of David, the shepherd boy who became king. So Ruth, the young woman of Moab, who chose the people and the God of Israel, became the mother of kings.

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